

F/V JODY H

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To Whom It May Concern:

This is in response to your inquiry for input on the Canadian interaction with the American fleet.

I am a third generation troll and pole albacore fisherman. My family started fishing in the 1950's. I began my fishing career when I was 8 year's old working on our family's boat and then I started my full time albacore career in 1981. Because of my background, I feel that I can truly give you a true perspective of the negative impact the Canadian's have on the U.S. fleet, fishermen and economy.

Since the '90's not only has the Canadian fleet size increased dramatically, but the aggressive behavior and disrespect in U.S. water's is becoming a serious problem, not to mention the impact on our U.S. fleet's catch and most importantly the U.S. economy. I will back up the facts that my co-fisherman have pointed out in their letters regarding the aggression witnessed, but no matter how you view these opinions it's all "heresy". Let's get right down to the main points.

Allowing Canadian fishermen into the U.S. EEZ is not only minimizing what the U.S. fisherman can catch (or would catch) but its also cutting into the U.S. economy. When you think about it, what is the total tonnage reported caught in U.S. water's by Canadians compared to what is actually offloaded at U.S. buying stations by Canadians? How many Canadian vessels and their crew pay taxes in the U.S. for their catch? Weigh that against how many tons are caught, and offloaded by U.S. fishermen, not to mention the taxes paid by these vessels and their crews. I believe it would safe to say that the majority of the Canadian fleet returns to Canada (their home country) to sell their fish. The small amount of Canadian fishermen that do offload, and get supplies in the U.S. is in no comparison to what the U.S. fleet would contribute to our coastal communities and the U.S. economy with the "extra" catch if we weren't forced to compete with them (Canadian fleet) in our waters. What's the benefit to our coastal communities and our economy to continue allowing the Canadian fishermen to continue fishing our waters, taking from our fishermen who support these small communities along our coast? I can only speak in regards to my own vessel and crew, but my crew is made up of 5 U.S. citizens (who all have families) whose monies earned go back into the U.S. economy. I'd like to point out that the size of the U.S. fleet changes yearly due to other fisheries being closed (for example the salmon fishery), which results in other U.S. fishermen converting their vessels to fish albacore to provide for their families. The price of albacore increasing has a great impact on the size of the U.S. fleet. This is one of the few open access fisheries left in the U.S. which is why its so important to keep our U.S. EEZ to only U.S. flagged boats. The impact of allowing over 100 foreign vessels into our waters is devastating to the entire U.S. fleet, especially those U.S. vessels whose sole income is generated from albacore alone.

In the famous words of John F. Kennedy, "Ask not what your country can do for you-ask what you can do for your country."

Scott Hawkins